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BOROUGH OF BEDFORD.

REPORT
OF THE
SCHOOL
MEDICAL OFFICER

For the Year 1943.



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SCHOOL MEDICAL DEPARTMENT,
TOWN HALL,
BEDFORD.

August, 1944.

*To His Worship the Mayor, the Aldermen and Councillors, and the Members
of the Education Committee of the Borough of Bedford.*

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my annual report for 1943. The production of this report, like its predecessors, has been delayed on account of the war.

My thanks are due to the Director of Education and his staff, and to the staff of the School Medical Service for their co-operation in carrying out the work.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

G. K. BOWES,

School Medical Officer.

Annual Report

OF THE

School Medical Officer

For the year 1943.

This report has been delayed in production and is considerably shortened in form on account of war-time conditions.

The average school population during the year 1943 was 5536, of which 4742 were classified as residents and 794 as evacuees. The number of evacuees continued to diminish though some of those previously classified as evacuees have, on account of change of circumstances, become classified as residents.

Scope of Inspection.

This remained unchanged.

Nutrition.

To speak generally the nutritional condition of the children was very good.

I am indebted to the Director of Education for the following figures relating to school milk and meals.

In connection with the provision of milk, the return made to the Board of Education in October, 1943, showed that 77% of the total children on the elementary school roll were having milk as against 73% in October, 1942. The actual numbers were as follow :

No. of children having 2 bottles daily ...	...	...	...	3023
No. of children having 1 bottle daily ...	...	...	...	738

Free milk supplies were arranged throughout the year for 244 children as compared with a total of 217 in the previous year. The number of Bedford children receiving free milk during December, 1943, was 27, and the number of evacuees 217.

Regarding the provision of school dinners, during 1943 a second school feeding kitchen was opened, this being at the Silver Jubilee School. The total daily number of dinners produced during December at the Harpur Central Kitchen and the Silver Jubilee Kitchen was 565, made up of 471 school children and 94 children attending the War-time Nursery Classes in the Borough.

At the time of printing this report a third kitchen—the St. John's Kitchen, capable of producing 750 meals daily—has been opened and the number of children having school dinners has been considerably increased.

During the year a good deal of attention was devoted to the quality of the milk and the general arrangements under the Milk-in-Schools Scheme.

The results of examinations indicated on occasion inefficient pasteurisation. The most unsatisfactory features, however, were related to the supply of milk in bulk which was made to some schools. It was found quite impossible in the schools properly to wash the bottles and distribute the milk in individual bottles to the children taking it. Moreover, the dairyman responsible for the supply of the schools in question was unable to supply all the schools with a bottled supply. In consequence, by arrangements with the dairyman, it was arranged that he should relinquish the supply to the schools previously supplied with milk in bulk, and these are all now supplied with milk in bottles from another dairyman. Conditions are now more satisfactory. A regular watch is kept through the Public Health Department on the supply of milk under the Scheme.

Pediculosis.

The number of individual children found unclean was 575 (including 491 residents and 84 evacuees) as compared with 883 (including 722 residents and 161 evacuees) in the previous year.

On account of the pressure of work at the Cleansing Station on the Goldington Road Football Ground in connection with scabies and cleansing of verminous adults, it was at times found difficult to find time to deal properly with school children requiring cleansing. In consequence arrangements were made for special sessions to be held at the school clinics for this purpose. During the year 51 sessions were held and 489 individuals, including 425 resident children and 64 evacuees were treated, while 868 attendances in all were made, 752 of resident children and 116 of evacuees.

Routine treatment is by lethane, which is applied by the School Nurse with an instruction to parents to eradicate all nits, and is followed by a subsequent inspection in a week's time. In exceptional cases actual eradication of nits may be undertaken at the clinic. It seems probable that the progressive decline in the numbers of children found unclean from 1133 in 1941 and 883 in 1942 to 575 in 1943 is due to this method of treatment and the keenness and enthusiasm of the School Nurses who carry it out.

Action under Section 87 of the Education Act 1921 was undertaken in one case only.

Scabies.

This condition remained prevalent during the year under review. In all, 41 cases, including 31 residents and 10 evacuees, were discovered among school children at inspections in schools or at the clinics.

The total number of cases among school children, in which the figures just given are included, whether discovered through the School Medical Service, by notification from doctors or by enquiries of Health Visitors, was 241 resident children and 85 evacuees. The general arrangements for treatment remained as in previous years.

Conclusion.

It is again possible to report that the children's health has remained generally good during the war, a result to be attributed to the fact that, while some war conditions are adverse, on the other hand, some, including special measures taken to counteract adverse influences, are even especially favourable to child life.

TABLE IV. DENTAL INSPECTION AND TREATMENT.

(1) Number of children inspected by the Dentist :									
(a) Routine age-groups	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6127(1094)
(b) Specials	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	224 (33)
(c) TOTAL (Routine and Specials)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6351(1127)
(2) Number found to require treatment	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3038 (609)
(3) Number actually treated	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2559 (396)
(4) Attendances made by children for treatment	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3696 (562)
(5) Half-days devoted to :—									
Inspection	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	49 (8)
Treatment	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	414 (52)
						Total	...	...	463 (60)
(6) Fillings :—									
Permanent Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1125 (204)
Temporary Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—
						Total	...	...	1125 (204)
(7) Extractions :—									
Permanent Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	634 (90)
Temporary Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3374 (385)
						Total	...	...	4008 (475)
(8) Administrations of general anaesthetics for extractions	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1602 (218)
(9) Other Operations :—									
Permanent Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	918 (164)
Temporary Teeth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—
						Total	...	...	918 (164)

TABLE V. VERMINOUS CONDITIONS.

(i) Average number of visits per school made during the year by the School Nurses or other authorised persons	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
(ii) Total number of examinations of children in the Schools by School Nurses or other authorised persons	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	16599 (1805)
(iii) Number of <i>individual</i> children found unclean	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	575 (84)
(iv) Number of <i>individual</i> children cleansed under Section 87 (2) and (3) of the Education Act, 1921	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1 (1)
(v) Number of cases in which legal proceedings were taken :—								
(a) Under the Education Act, 1921	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—
(b) Under School Attendance Byelaws	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—

TABLE VI. BLIND AND DEAF CHILDREN.

Number of totally or almost totally blind and deaf children who are *not* at the present time receiving education suitable for their special needs.

	1. At a Public Elementary School	2. At an institution other than a Special School	3. At no School or Institution
Blind Children	—	—	—
Deaf Children	—	—	—

N.B.—Figures in brackets denote evacuees included in total.

